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SUBJECT: CHILD MARRIAGE IN FRANCE

REF: STATE 36341

1. (U) Following is post's response to request for information on child marriage. Following paras respond directly to reftel's three questions.
2. (U) Reftel Question A: Males can legally marry in France at age 18; females at 15 (Article 144, Civil Code). Girls between 15 and 18 can be married with the consent of one parent; girls under 15 and boys under 18 who wish to marry require a favorable decision from the State Prosecutor.
3. (U) Reftel Question B: Underage marriage is not a problem in the population at large in France. According to a recent report by a working group focused on women immigrants in France, the problem of underage or forced marriage is greatest in immigrant communities from Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, North Africa, Turkey, and Asia. The High Council of Immigration (HCI), a government body, cites the number of young women in France who are "susceptible" to forced marriages at around 70,000, a number derived from NGOs who work with at-risk populations. (NOTE: the government does not have the means to collect official statistics on the matter, and the description of the population "susceptible" to forced marriage is necessarily broader than the number of persons who may actually be subjected to it.)
4. (U) Reftel Question C: There are no US-funded initiatives addressing child marriage in France.
Leach